



CABINET – 14TH OCTOBER 2015

SUBJECT: CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the final draft Corporate Safeguarding Policy (attached at Appendix 1) to Cabinet for comment, decision and endorsement.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 In the period March to May 2014 the Welsh Audit Office (WAO) completed a review of Caerphilly County Borough Council's (the Council) assurance and accountability arrangements for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures were in place and being adhered to.
- 2.2 The findings of the Review were published in October 2014 and reported to Cabinet on 10th December 2014 where it was agreed that a cross Directorate group of key Officers would be established to implement the recommendations made by WAO. This report serves to update Cabinet on the actions taken to meet the WAO requirements through the production of an overarching Corporate Safeguarding Policy.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults is a key statutory duty of the Council.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The WAO Review concluded that,
- The governance, accountability and management arrangements for overseeing whether the Council is meeting its safeguarding responsibilities to children had some weaknesses which the Council is addressing.
 - The Council's arrangements for monitoring and evaluating its safeguarding responsibilities to children had some weaknesses which the Council must address.
 - The Council's approach to identifying and acting on improvements in its safeguarding arrangements had some weaknesses which the Council is addressing.

- 4.3 It is important to note that the Review did not identify any weaknesses in the operational, day to day safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in Caerphilly. The recommendations relate to the corporate governance of those arrangements.
- 4.4 Following on from the conclusions, the Review made five proposals for improvement. These were:
- To develop a Corporate Safeguarding Policy that clearly specifies roles, responsibilities and procedures for safeguarding.
 - The Council should clarify who designated officers with responsibility for safeguarding are.
 - Improve the range, quality and coverage of safeguarding performance reporting to Members to provide adequate assurance that corporate arrangements are working effectively.
 - Ensure all Elected Members and staff who come into contact with children on a regular basis receive training on safeguarding and child protection issues and the Council's corporate policy on safeguarding. This should also include volunteers and contractors commissioned by the Council.
 - To identify and agree an appropriate internal audit programme of work for safeguarding.
- 4.5 Corporate Management Team and Cabinet agreed that the Assistant Director for Children's Services should lead on the establishment of a cross Directorate Corporate Safeguarding Group to develop and implement an action plan to address the recommendations of the Review. For information, membership of the Group is detailed in Appendix 2.
- 4.6 Between February and July 2015, the Corporate Safeguarding Group worked to develop a draft policy to meet the five recommendations detailed at 4.4. The draft policy was presented to CMT on 17th September and minor amendments were made.
- 4.7 Cabinet will see that the draft policy has been structured to provide relevant detailed information in a series of appendices. This will allow individual sections to be updated and reissued as and when changes are required without having to reissue the whole document.
- 4.8 Cabinet are asked to consider and agree the following:
- That the current Corporate Induction process is reviewed and strengthened to include reference to the Safeguarding Policy and that this is progressed by the HR Strategy Group.
 - For specific reference to be made to the Safeguarding Policy in the mandatory Induction process for new Elected Members following elections.
 - The appointment of a Lead Cabinet Member for Safeguarding. The Lead Cabinet Member will chair the Corporate Safeguarding Group.
 - The nomination of Elected Member representation from each of the Political Party Groups to join the Corporate Safeguarding Group
 - Awareness raising sessions for the Lead Cabinet Member and those Elected Members nominated to join the Corporate Safeguarding Group should be made mandatory.
 - The proposed governance arrangements as outlined in Section 5 (p12) are agreed.
 - The development of a Safeguarding Portal on the Intranet is supported.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report requires no specific equalities impact assessment.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There is likely to be demand for additional training to be provided for identified staff groups. This may incur additional costs and will be continually reviewed as the work progresses.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct personnel implications associated with this report however, a review of HR policies to ensure they address safeguarding issues will be a priority for the HR Strategy Group and the Corporate Safeguarding Group.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 Please refer to Consultees listed below.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That Cabinet endorses the draft Policy and recommends approval by Council.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Compliance with the recommendations from the Wales Audit Office Review will further strengthen the authority's arrangements for the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Gareth Jenkins, Assistant Director Children's Services
Consultees to date: Corporate Management Team
Statutory Director of Social Services
Social Services Senior Management Team
Cabinet Member for Social Services
Corporate Safeguarding Group

Appendix 1: Caerphilly County Borough Council, Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Corporate Policy.

Appendix 2: Corporate Safeguarding Group Membership